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Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing

Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report contains information on national activities in 2004/05 in follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing. It describes activities of the Secretariat and the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, as well as major international non-governmental organizations, in support of national implementation, as well as their efforts to mainstream ageing issues into international programmes and activities. The report provides recommendations to promote implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, for the consideration of the General Assembly.

Contents

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	Introduction	1–2	2
II.	Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002	3–50	2
	A. National action	4–16	3
	B. Support for national action	17–23	6
	C. International action	24–44	9
	D. Regional action	45–49	15
	E. Research Agenda on Ageing for the Twenty-First Century	50	16
III.	Conclusion	51–53	17

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 59/150 of 20 December 2004, recommended that ongoing efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration (see resolution 55/2), take into account the situation of older persons and called upon Governments and the agencies and organizations of the United Nations system, within their mandates, and encouraged the non-governmental community, to ensure that the challenges of population ageing and the concerns of older persons were adequately incorporated into their programmes and projects. The Assembly invited Member States and the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to take into account the needs and concerns of older persons in decision-making at all levels. It also invited Governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to encourage and support comprehensive, diversified and specialized research on ageing in all countries.

2. The General Assembly stressed the need for additional capacity-building at the national level in order to promote and facilitate implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002,[1] and in that connection, encouraged Governments to support the United Nations Trust Fund for Ageing to enable the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, to provide expanded assistance to countries, upon their request. Stressing the importance of the collection of data and population statistics disaggregated by age and sex on all aspects of policy formulation by all countries, the Assembly encouraged the relevant entities of the United Nations system to support national efforts in capacity-building. Finally, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its sixtieth session on the implementation of resolution 59/150. The present report responds to that request and provides information on national and international efforts and activities to implement the Madrid Plan of Action, based on contributions received from Governments, United Nations system focal points on ageing and major non-governmental organizations working in the field of ageing.

II. Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002

3. Progress in the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action is contingent upon simultaneous and coordinated actions at national and international levels. The road map for the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action (A/58/160, sect. III) provides a practical approach to implement the plan. It offers a framework for Governments and other stakeholders to elaborate national implementation strategies by setting national priorities and selecting adequate approaches. While focusing on national implementation processes, the road map attempts to mobilize international cooperation to support the activities of Member States.

[1] *Report of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, Madrid, 8-12 April 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.IV.4), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

A. National action

4. The Madrid Plan of Action stresses the primary responsibility of Governments for implementing its broad recommendations and emphasizes that a necessary first step is to mainstream ageing and the concerns of older persons into national development frameworks and poverty eradication strategies. It identifies crucial elements for implementation, including: institutional follow-up; effective organizations of older persons; educational, training and research activities on ageing; and national data collection and analysis. The road map defines two universal and essential facets of the national implementation process, particularly in developing countries and countries with economies in transition: national capacity-building; and mainstreaming of ageing into the national development agenda. Information available to the Secretariat suggests several arenas of national implementation activities, including: national capacity-building and promotion of institutional follow-up to the Madrid Plan; ageing-specific policy and programmes; and mainstreaming efforts.

Countries of the Economic Commission for Africa region

5. The Ministry of Social Affairs of Guinea established a unit in charge of questions relating to older persons and put in place a committee to analyse the recommendations of the Madrid Plan of Action. The Government aims to conduct a study on the situation of older persons in the short term and to elaborate a national policy on ageing in the longer term. Kenya adopted a policy that increases the retirement age. In Mauritius, a national coordinating committee and relevant subcommittees were set up to oversee implementation. As of mid-2004, a bill for the protection of the elderly was being prepared.

6. Nigeria implements policies to integrate older persons as agents of socio-economic development. Senegal is now firmly committed to integrating ageing issues in national development programmes, including those aimed at the elimination of poverty, and has drafted a national plan of action on ageing (2005-2009) that is awaiting adoption.

Countries of the Economic Commission for Europe region

7. Azerbaijan has taken measures to establish an integrated system of social services for older persons. The implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action in Belarus is coordinated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. Several programmes are currently in place to benefit older persons, including a programme to address the issues of concern to older persons for the period 2001-2005 and a programme to support local and national organizations of veterans. Croatia continues to implement guidelines for amending existing laws and creating new ones to improve the quality of life of older persons. It promotes non-institutional social care, especially at the local level, in order to make the network of services more accessible to a larger number of older persons. The Ministry of Social Affairs of Denmark has maintained regular dialogue with individual senior citizens through the Association of Senior Citizen Councils. Furthermore, an independent national council (the "Age Forum") monitors and assesses conditions of older persons. In Finland, the Council of State prepared a report on the effects of changes in the age structure of the population and the ways in which different administrative sectors can prepare themselves for the changes. The overall themes of the report — a

healthy and active population and society for all ages — are based on the Madrid Plan of Action. The Government recognizes the need for a coherent, multisectoral ageing policy and for the adoption of a lifespan perspective a part of social policy.

8. The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth of Germany set up a coordinating unit in the Federal Association of Senior Citizens' Organizations comprising 89 seniors' organizations and representing nine million older persons. The unit is developing a national plan for implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action. It also informs the public about the state of implementation and organizes technical conferences to support national implementation activities. Initiatives in Luxembourg include promotion of seniors' clubs, life-long learning programmes and health and social services for older persons. Efforts to address the situation of older persons and implement the Madrid Plan of Action in the Russian Federation focus on both ageing-specific programmes and mainstreaming efforts. The midterm (2003-2005) programme of social and economic development of the Russian Federation promotes the development of human capital through social services for people of different ages. The concerns of older persons are also addressed within the federal programme "Habitation" (2002-2010). The overhaul of the existing welfare system that affected millions of people, including older citizens, was initiated by the Government of the Russian Federation in May 2004. The new "benefits-to-cash" law provided an opportunity to simplify the existing outmoded system and offered greater transparency, a needs-based approach and equal treatment of beneficiaries, including older persons, in the cities and rural areas. Implementation, which started in January 2005, was not without controversy, as there were difficulties in coordination, particularly in regard to funding, between the federal Government and regional authorities. The welfare reform reinforced an ongoing shift towards regional, rather than central, provision of social support and social services for different vulnerable groups.

9. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland early in 2005 published a major new strategy, "Opportunity age — meeting the challenges of ageing in the twenty-first century". The strategy is a cross-ministerial initiative in which major stakeholders, including civil society, participated. The strategy charts new approaches and relationships that will meet the future needs of an older society, and has three main priorities: higher employment rates and greater employment flexibility for people over 50 years of age; enabling older people to play a full and active role in society; and promoting independence and control over life in old age. Indicators and outcomes to operationalize the strategy are being prepared.

Countries of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean region

10. In Bolivia, all older persons are entitled to receive an annual pension bonus. In 2003, Brazil adopted a national law that established the right of older persons who want to continue to work to do so, and promoted access to education and training, food, shelter and medical care. The Government of Colombia is working on a long-term public policy on ageing based on the Madrid Plan of Action, the regional implementation strategy and the realities of the national situation under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Protection, the Government agency charged with coordination ageing issues. Costa Rica created the *Consejo Nacional de la Persona Adulta Mayor* and is implementing several programmes and services, with a strong emphasis on inter-institutional arrangements. Cuba developed important geriatric

and gerontological health resources and universal coverage of social security and health benefits for older persons. The Dominican Republic established conditions for the creation of a national council of older persons. A law on older persons was approved in El Salvador in 2002. It facilitates implementation of a national policy to integrate older persons in the formal and informal labour market, encourages life-long education and promotes a model of the health of older persons among health-care personnel. It is expected that a plan of action will be elaborated later this year. The national institution responsible for issues of older persons in Guatemala, *Programa Nacional del Adulto Mayor*, is undertaking an assessment of their situation. In Honduras, the Congress is discussing a law on the protection of older persons and pensioners. Actions to be implemented under this law will be delegated to relevant programmes such as the Honduran Fund for Social Investment, which finances microenterprise projects.

11. In Mexico, a law on the rights of older persons was approved in 2002. The Mexican national coordinating body for ageing issues is the *Instituto Nacional de las Personas Adultas Mayores*, which established an inter-institutional coordinating council on older persons to promote activities of governmental and non-governmental organizations within the national gerontological programme and to formulate a policy on ageing. Nicaragua has outlined the principal directions of a national policy on social protection within which a social policy on older persons will be framed. During 2004 an analysis of the situation of older persons was carried out in Panama and a national policy was outlined under the auspices of the National Directorate of Older Persons. In 2005, Panama drafted a national plan of action. In Suriname, a national advisory board was established to provide the Government with the necessary advice on population ageing. A law on the promotion and integration of older persons was approved in Uruguay in 2004. It contains a framework for developing a national health-care plan of action. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has focused on developing programmes of social welfare, health and economic support for older persons.

12. Many countries in the English-speaking Caribbean have adopted policies on ageing and on older persons and strengthened institutional arrangements, including through the establishment of national councils. Various initiatives have also been undertaken to facilitate social contacts among generations and to promote the well-being of older citizens.

Countries of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific region

13. Bangladesh has a national coordinating body on ageing and a Cabinet committee with responsibility for overall supervision of the old-age allowance programme. The programme seeks to increase the number of recipients of the old-age allowance: while it is estimated that five million chronically poor older persons are eligible, currently only 1.315 million people receive the allowance. Indonesia adopted a national action plan on ageing for 2003-2008 following a national workshop in February 2003. A national commission on ageing was established in 2004 to assist the President in coordinating implementation of national policies and programmes for older persons and to provide policy advice and recommendations. Recent initiatives in Japan include the introduction of a continuous employment system, which applies to people up to the age of 65 and facilitates re-employment of older persons. Continuing national discussions focus on revision of the pension and health-care schemes.

14. The Republic of Korea reorganized its Ministry of Health and Welfare at the end of 2003 to strengthen the roles and functions of the units in charge of population ageing and the welfare of older persons. The Government established the Presidential Committee on Ageing and Future Society early in 2004 to analyse and assess social and economic changes caused by rapid population ageing and advise the president on appropriate long-term policies. Recent policy initiatives include work on a new legal framework and revision of some existing laws and regulations, including the adoption of a new basic act on ageing society; elimination of potentially discriminatory practices on wages and retirement age; revision of the pension system to encompass a multi-pillar model and groups not protected by existing pension schemes; and preparation of the physical and human infrastructure for the introduction of a new long-term care insurance. The Government of New Zealand continues to implement its "positive ageing strategy", which promotes opportunities for older persons to participate and contribute. Relevant Government agencies are drawing up a longer-term action plan that specifies objectives, links to positive ageing goals, measures for achievement and key actions and time frames.

15. The Philippines formed an inter-agency committee on the Philippine plan of action for older persons (1999-2004), which distributed the Madrid Plan of Action to all field offices, local government units and non-governmental organizations. Furthermore, the Philippines developed an information and communication technology group to encourage interaction among local, regional and national committees. This group provides a repository of research on older persons and expedites dissemination of the Madrid Plan of Action. Sri Lanka established an elders' council in 2002, which set up committees of older persons at the village level to organize programmes to benefit older persons and engage them in decision-making on community matters.

Countries of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia region

16. Lebanon is developing a work plan based on the objectives of the Madrid Plan of Action. The Supreme Council for Family Affairs of Qatar is preparing a national strategy on ageing based on the recommendations of the Madrid Plan of Action and identification of pertinent themes. Qatar hosted the Doha International Conference on Ageing in April 2005 to create awareness of the needs of older persons and their potential to participate in social development efforts. The final outcome was a declaration calling for the formulation of a universal declaration of rights for older persons. The Syrian Arab Republic has a national plan of action oriented towards the health and social welfare of older persons. There is a cross-ministerial national committee for the social welfare of older persons chaired by the Minister of Health.

B. Support for national action

17. The Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs continues work on the technical assistance initiative launched in 2003 to support Member States in implementing the Madrid Plan of Action. Advisory missions were undertaken to Kyrgyzstan in late 2004 and to Egypt in early 2005. A key overall objective in the provision of advisory services is to assist Member States in taking an integrated approach to issues of older persons and population ageing through mainstreaming into national development plans and policies across all sectors, as called for in the Madrid Plan of Action and the road

map for its implementation. A project proposal to secure funding for future and expanded work at the national level and provide for the inclusion of more partners, as called for in General Assembly resolution 59/150, has been submitted for Development Account funding.

18. In Kyrgyzstan and Egypt, the overall objective was to carry out a rapid needs assessment in different regions of the countries to ascertain the situation of older persons and their place in current sociocultural and economic contexts, the policy environment, the institutional framework and the operational context. This was achieved through discussions with representatives of Government at all levels, United Nations programmes and agencies, civil society and older people themselves as well as reference to relevant documentation. The findings were discussed with stakeholders, including Government officials and civil society organizations during multi-sector workshops where the groundwork was laid for a strategic and coordinated approach to the agreed-upon priority issues. Further follow-up work to help stakeholders fully apply and implement new approaches and strategies will be undertaken in the latter half of 2005.

19. At this stage of the technical assistance programme it is clear that while each national situation is unique, there are also a number of common issues affecting implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action at the national level. In some regions the most important issue is a general lack of awareness of the Plan or its contents, in particular by the ministries responsible for ageing issues. In addition, there is a lack of knowledge about the Plan among United Nations staff in field offices, even in those United Nations funds and agencies with a stated commitment to mainstream ageing in their development activities. Most bilateral donors have not taken the issue of ageing or the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action on board in their work at the national level. Some United Nations agencies, however, are taking steps that could improve this situation. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is preparing a policy paper that will provide guidance for programmatic work and encourage its country offices to support the implementation of the Plan and provide technical assistance as needed. UNFPA has also continued to promote national capacity-building indirectly by supporting training institutes, including the International Institute on Ageing in Malta and the international programme on population ageing in developing countries at Columbia University in New York. Also, the Headquarters Poverty Reduction Group of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) continues to develop a practice note on ageing and development that will bring the issue to a wider audience at both Headquarters and in the field. Overall, it is clear that the strategy for raising the visibility of the Madrid Plan of Action at the national level among both Government officials and development agencies, as well as efforts to support the inclusion of older persons into United Nations and national development strategies and programmes, need to be strengthened.

20. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean has provided technical assistance to several countries to reinforce their capacity for designing, implementing and monitoring the regional strategy for the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action (ECLAC document LC/L.2079). Support for policy design was provided to El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama and Paraguay. The Commission is also supporting research activities at the national level. A study using the Delphi methodology is being conducted in Chile, the Dominican Republic, Panama and Uruguay to help countries to identify long-term scenarios for ageing

policies. In addition, training workshops for journalists were held in the Dominican Republic, El Salvador and Nicaragua. ECLAC supports research in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Colombia on participatory methodology in the design and implementation of ageing laws, policies and programmes.

21. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) focuses on helping Member States to implement their commitments under the Shanghai Implementation Strategy for the Madrid and Macao plans of action on ageing (ECLAC document E/ECLAC/1280) in the areas of social protection and health care. From mid-2004 to mid-2005 ESCAP has provided advisory services in the area of information and training, including on measuring changes in population structure, policy implications of population ageing and long-term health care. The training also focused on the advantages to Governments of utilizing participatory bottom-up approaches for data collection related to population and individual ageing; methods of bottom-up data collection, interpretation and tracking of progress indicators; resource mobilization to address ageing issues; and means of financing initial efforts and activities to implement national policy on ageing. Under the umbrella of a regional project designed to develop rapid participatory assessment tools to help Member States in their responses to population ageing, several national-level field studies were undertaken in China and Sri Lanka, utilizing tools developed to assess the impact of policies and programmes in rural communities. This work laid the groundwork for the development of a matrix of indicators to help Governments to formulate better strategies. To demonstrate national application of the draft indicators, the Government of China invited ESCAP to organize a national workshop to train professionals and practitioners involved in ageing issues. The efforts of ESCAP are backed up with training manuals designed specifically to meet local realities, publications on best practices for replication, knowledge updating through expert group meetings and regional seminars to review progress in meeting challenges.

22. The International Institute on Ageing in Malta organizes training programmes in Malta and elsewhere and has set up satellite centres to assist in capacity-building. Three centres were established during the past three years: in Singapore; in Pune, India; and in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation. Other satellite centres are planned in Latin America, China and the Middle East. The Institute's training programmes for capacity-building are further reinforced by information exchange, technical cooperation, advocacy and publications. During 2004, the Institute was requested by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Solidarity of Tunisia to prepare a 10-year plan of action on ageing. This project is co-funded by the Government and UNDP. In addition, as a result of the Institute's long-standing collaboration with various Chinese organizations working in the field of ageing, during 2004 two training programmes were organized, in Beijing and in Malta, which were attended by 60 Chinese officials from the Beijing civil affairs bureau.

23. In addition to and sometimes in connection with the work of United Nations organizations, several international non-governmental organizations in the field of ageing provide support to develop national capacity on ageing. HelpAge International supported the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania in ensuring that review of its poverty reduction strategy included direct consultations with older persons and that issues which emerged were incorporated in the strategy. The revised document has specific social protection and social inclusion goals that will directly benefit older persons. HelpAge International has shared this experience

with organizations of older persons, Member States (including during the side events held during the session of the Commission for Social Development in 2005), donors and, in particular, the World Bank at its civil society organization consultations on poverty reduction strategy papers in April 2005. Consultations are currently taking place with the Government of Mozambique based on the experience of the United Republic of Tanzania. The organization also provided direct support for policy development and mainstreaming in Bangladesh, Kenya and Mozambique, and continued to support capacity-building of civil society organizations in Kyrgyzstan, including through collaboration with the advisory mission of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. HelpAge International has supported evidence gathering and research at the national level in order to improve policymaking on a variety of issues, including the impact of HIV/AIDS on older persons and their dependents in the United Republic of Tanzania and Thailand, the nutritional status of older persons in displaced persons camps in the Sudan, and the impact of the tsunami of 2004 on older persons in India and Sri Lanka. The organization is entering the final phase of a project which builds the capacity of older persons and their organizations to assess the achievement of policy commitments and to advocate for improvement in implementation in Bangladesh, Bolivia, Ethiopia, Jamaica, Kenya, the Republic of Moldova and the United Republic of Tanzania.

C. International action

24. The Madrid Plan of Action emphasizes enhanced and focused international cooperation and effective commitment by developed countries and international development agencies to enable implementation of the Plan. Similarly important is a commitment by United Nations funds and programmes to ensure integration of issues of ageing in their programmes and projects, including at country level. The road map for the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action underscores the central place of mainstreaming and calls for integrating ageing into existing processes and work programmes of the United Nations system organizations and development budgets. Older persons must be included in policy implementation and evaluation as a matter of course.

25. The Millennium Declaration and the subsequent Millennium Development Goals do not specifically address the challenges and opportunities of ageing. Since the goal to halve global poverty by 2015 and many other objectives are inherently intergenerational by nature, it is essential to take into account and reflect both the social and economic implications of demographic ageing and the needs of older persons in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. This approach entails mainstreaming their concerns into the global agenda. In connection with the first five-year review of the Millennium Declaration, the international community is encouraged to consider older persons as a resource for development and not simply as beneficiaries.

26. To assist Governments in developing approaches that mainstream ageing in the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action, the Division for Social Policy and Development posted on its website a discussion paper, "Mainstreaming the concerns of older persons into the social development agenda" (www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing/mainstream.htm). The paper attempts to define and explain the term "mainstreaming" and reviews mandates related to mainstreaming efforts. It

identifies topics, such as participation, education and health care, that are crucial for older persons and relates them to mainstreaming. Essential tools and techniques for systematic mainstreaming are also reviewed.

27. Various types of social protection, including social assistance and welfare services, as well as social insurance programmes geared at cushioning the risks associated with old age, were explored at length during the regional policy workshop for senior national officials organized by the Division for Social Policy and Development in November 2004 in India (see www.un.org/esa/socdev/htm). Emphasis was given to reviewing country experiences and best practices in South and East Asia, particularly regarding design, operational nature and effectiveness of partnership arrangements for social protection of older persons in formal and informal sectors.

28. The Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs gave special attention to the needs and concerns of older women in the review and appraisal of implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The situation of older women was considered in the context of the analysis of critical areas such as women and poverty, women and the economy and women and health.

29. The Population Division integrates population ageing and associated policy issues into its technical work programme, publications and support for the Commission on Population and Development. Activities focus on research of the demographic aspects of population ageing and related policy issues, including studies aimed at understanding the social and economic causes and consequences of population ageing. In 2005, the Division issued a new assessment of population estimates and projections to 2050 (www.un.org/esa/population/publications/WPP2004/2004Highlights_finalrevised.pdf), which is also available on CD-ROM. In addition to providing the full distribution of populations by sex and age by five-year age groups to 100 years and over, the published results include several summary statistics on population ageing, including the proportion of the population aged over 60 years and over 65 years, median age of the population and old-age dependency ratios. Also available are estimates of life expectancy of older men and women. The Population Division is planning to convene an expert meeting on the social and economic implications of changing population age structures during 2005. The proceedings of the meeting will contribute to the work of the Commission on Population and Development in 2007, when the special topic for the Commission will be the changing age structures of populations and their implications for development. A publication on living arrangements of older persons around the world will be issued in 2005. The study focuses on co-residence of older persons with family members, particularly children, on solitary living and the institutionalization of older persons. An updated version of the wall chart "World Population Ageing" will also be published during 2005.

30. The fourteenth annual International Day of Older Persons was observed globally on 1 October 2004 under the theme "Older persons in an intergenerational society". At United Nations Headquarters, the Non-Governmental Organizations Section of the Department of Public Information hosted a half-day event organized by the NGO Committee on Ageing in cooperation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and attended by some 500 people. The Secretary-General's message was presented and speakers included the Chairperson of the NGO

Committee on Ageing; representatives of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNFPA; and several Government officials and experts on care of older persons from Jamaica, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United States of America. The Strategic Communications Division of the Department of Public Information publicized the International Day to media, especially through its network of United Nations information centres, which arranged for the Secretary-General's message to be translated into 10 languages and distributed to journalists and non-governmental organizations. The information centres also ensured television, radio and newspaper coverage of ageing issues in national and local media. United Nations media outlets covered the Day, including a United Nations Radio story about the life of a 90-year-old woman.

31. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) contributes to the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action within the general context of addressing the needs of poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. At its twentieth session, in 2005, the Governing Council adopted a resolution (HSP/GC/RES/20/13) entitled "Housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living for persons who are vulnerable and disadvantaged". This resolution makes several references to older persons and requests all stakeholders, including Governments, local authorities, the international community and civil society to strengthen their focus and capacity so that more effective and concerted actions can be initiated to benefit vulnerable and disadvantaged persons. UN-Habitat participated in a number of international activities organized on topics related to ageing and older persons.

32. In 2005, UNFPA convened a meeting of experts to discuss policy and programme priorities in the field of population ageing, the Fund's comparative advantage and the strategic way forward in this area. UNFPA is preparing a policy paper, providing guidance for programmatic work and encouraging country offices to support the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action and to offer technical assistance, as needed. UNFPA encourages a focus on the older poor in Common Country Assessments, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, poverty reduction strategy papers and reporting on the Millennium Development Goals. UNFPA helps build country capacity for age and gender-disaggregated data collection and analysis for policy formulation, programme planning and monitoring and evaluation. UNFPA will use the opportunity of the fortieth session of the Commission on Population and Development in 2007 to monitor population programmes in this area and focus on the impact of population ageing on development as well as programmatic responses to the challenges it presents.

33. Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing by the International Labour Organization (ILO) is based on the premise that genuine solutions to the challenges of ageing societies should be sought by increasing participation in the labour force and promoting job creation. Productive and decent employment is the most powerful lever to ensure the stability of social security during demographic change and to enhance social security coverage. The ILO employment and social protection sectors developed a joint proposal for the agenda of the ninety-sixth session (2007) of the International Labour Conference on the theme "Employment and social protection in ageing societies". The proposal will be discussed during the meeting of the ILO Governing Body to be held in November 2005.

34. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has mainstreamed its work on rural ageing by focusing on enhancing income

opportunities for rural older persons in agriculture and related sectors; providing older rural residents with the agro-technical and business management skills they need; upgrading agricultural production technologies to meet the special requirements of older workers; supporting rural older persons as agents in the intergenerational transmission of agricultural knowledge and farming skills; preparing agricultural extension services to address extension and training needs of older farmers; reinforcing policies to assure that older rural men and women have access to services and productive resources; helping older members of farm households to cope with the effects of HIV/AIDS on their families and communities; supporting rural communities in developing effective responses to the effects of population ageing on agriculture, natural resources and rural development in general; improving the organization of agricultural emergency operations to better respond to the needs of older persons; strengthening the nutritional status of rural seniors through improved dietary practices and food security interventions; and taking a leadership role in promoting the human rights of rural older persons, especially their right to adequate food. In order to improve understanding of rural ageing issues, FAO has undertaken country studies in Bolivia, Chile, Ghana, India and Thailand. In addition, a series of technical papers on various aspects of rural ageing was published on the FAO website. The primary purpose of these materials is to reinforce the capacity of FAO member States to address effectively the implications of population ageing for agriculture.

35. WHO formulated a project to promote an integrated response of health-care systems to rapid population ageing in developing countries (the INTRA project). The project creates a knowledge base to support countries in reorienting policies towards integrated health and social care systems serving older populations. The first two phases of the project (now completed), conducted in 12 developing countries (Botswana, Chile, China, Ghana, Jamaica, Lebanon, Peru, the Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Suriname, the Syrian Arab Republic and Thailand), consisted of quantitative and qualitative research on the care-seeking behaviours of older people at primary health-care level; the roles, needs and attitudes of their service providers; and the types of services provided. Governments, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations contributed to this interdisciplinary research project, which resulted in the sharing of information and models of good practice among participating countries and a series of specific policy recommendations. The current phase, implemented in collaboration with the WHO Centre for Health and Development, Kobe, Japan and being conducted in Bolivia, India, Kenya, Malaysia, Pakistan and Trinidad and Tobago, focuses on older people who do not use primary health-care services. The project will lead to comprehensive policy recommendations on developing a continuum of care within the primary health-care sector aiming towards integrated old-age care.

36. Recognizing the importance of relevant training for future health workers, WHO partners with the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations in a continuing effort to mainstream ageing in medical curriculums and to strengthen the teaching of geriatric medicine in 42 countries. UNFPA and WHO are conducting a study on the factors that determine the health status of older women and their access to care as a contribution to the tenth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The project will lead to a publication emphasizing best practices and policy recommendations, to be launched on the International Day of Older Persons 2005. The Eastern Mediterranean Office convened a meeting of experts in Bahrain in April 2005 to finalize the regional strategic plan of work on ageing and health for 2006-2015.

37. The WHO study on global ageing and adult health was developed using the world health survey programme. It will provide both a platform for data collection over time and methodologies for comparing the health and well-being of older persons within and across countries. The specific objectives of the study are to provide data to inform policy; to examine patterns and dynamics of age-related changes in health and well-being using longitudinal follow-up of survey respondents as they age; to investigate socio-economic consequences of these health changes; to supplement and cross-validate self-reported measures of health through measured performance tests; to collect health examination and biomarker data to improve reliability of information on morbidity and risk factors; and to monitor the effect of interventions. The study will serve as an independent monitoring platform for the Madrid Plan of Action, as it will provide comparable and valid cross-national longitudinal data on several objectives of the Plan in multiple countries. It will also provide a public-access information base to engage stakeholders, including national policymakers and health systems planners, in planning and decision-making processes about the health and well-being of older adults.

38. The fifty-eighth World Health Assembly (May 2005) endorsed a resolution (WHA58.16) entitled "Strengthening active and healthy ageing" by which, among other priorities, it urged Member States to strengthen national action in order to ensure sufficient resources to fulfil commitments to implementing the Madrid Plan of Action and related regional plans of action relating to the health and well-being of older persons. The Assembly requested the Director-General of WHO, inter alia, to strengthen the Organization's capacity to incorporate work on ageing throughout its activities and programmes at all levels.

39. Strengthening old-age income protection and reducing old-age vulnerability and poverty have been an integral part of the agenda of the World Bank for much of the last two decades. Loans during the period 2002 to 2004 with pension components totalled $2,775 million. In addition, since 2002 the Bank has published around 50 papers and books on pension issues and served as a key conduit for knowledge of pension reform on a national, regional and global basis. A notable milestone in establishing a framework for assessing ageing was the May 2005 release of the Bank report, "Old-age income support in the twenty-first century: an international perspective on pension systems and reforms". Other publications recently issued by the Bank include "Pensions in the Middle East and North Africa: time for change" (2005); "Pension reform in Europe: process and progress" (2003); "Public pension fund management: governance, accountability, and investment policies" (2003); and "Keeping the promise of social security in Latin America" (2003). Issues of ageing are also essential to actions and programmes for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. As recently suggested in the Global Monitoring Report 2005, the Bank is committed to the scaling up of development efforts at the country level (including for issues of ageing) as guided by country-owned and country-led poverty reduction strategies or equivalent national development strategies. Within this framework, the Bank works to support the global partnership for development by its efforts to improve governance and public sector management for publicly managed mandatory and voluntary pension systems.

40. World Bank staff specialized in issues pertaining to older persons are assigned to social protection groups in each of the regions. These staff members work with country representatives to assess individual country needs, determine an appropriate

plan of action and articulate the reform agenda. Central units are also responsible for developing a broader framework for assessing ageing issues, undertaking cross-country and country-specific research on pertinent issues of old-age income and vulnerability protection, managing international knowledge, ensuring active development of internal policies, and assessing ex post the impact of Bank-supported interventions.

41. The work of HelpAge International to mainstream ageing includes collaborating with the UNDP Bureau of Policy Development and its related International Poverty Centre in Brasilia and providing input to the *Human Development Report* to ensure that it covers issues of ageing. HelpAge International has engaged actively with donors on inclusive and rights-based approaches, which require action by Governments to eliminate discrimination on the basis of age. This work includes oral and written submissions to the Government of the United Kingdom for the development of a policy paper entitled "Partnerships for poverty reduction: rethinking conditionality". The paper includes human rights and a focus on the vulnerable and marginalized, including older persons, as one of three core elements of poverty reduction policy, and will guide negotiations on aid policy in recipient countries. HelpAge International supports the development of country-based guidelines to roll out the policy. The organization also provided evidence on age discrimination, abuse and gender-based violations of rights to various policy forums. A paper produced by HelpAge International in 2005, "MDGs must target the poorest, say older people", will be used during country-level discussions related to the Millennium Development Goals.

42. The International Federation on Ageing, in partnership with a private sector stakeholder, launched a project involving non-governmental organizations in Cameroon, India, South Africa and Uganda linked with partner organizations in Australia, Israel and the United Kingdom. The project aims to strengthen the capacity of non-governmental organizations in developing countries to facilitate access for older people to health care and service delivery. The specific aim of the pilot project is to design approaches to improve the health and well-being of older people through careful, realistic planning and the exchange of expertise among organizations. With regard to mainstreaming, the Federation examines in detail national policy documents from 25 countries as they relate to ageing as part of the project "Voices of Action". The project pays particular attention to the influence of international agreements such as the Madrid Plan of Action and the Millennium Declaration on the development and direction of policies on ageing. The World Exposition of Innovation: Design for an Ageing Society, planned for May 2008, will contribute to monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action. Experts on ageing, design and sustainable environment will discuss the future of design as a vehicle for addressing the social needs of the ageing population.

43. The International Association of Gerontology held its eighteenth congress in Rio de Janeiro in June 2005. More than 4,000 researchers and practitioners from all regions explored the theme of active ageing in the twenty-first century: participation, health and security. Four symposiums were held to address the role of the International Association of Gerontology in follow-up to the Madrid assembly. The Association also conducted the first meeting of a steering committee for the world ageing survey that will monitor the health and welfare of older persons.

44. The International Council for Caring Communities organized three events to mainstream ageing issues at local and international levels. The 2004 student design competition invited architecture students from around the world to develop solutions that integrate older persons in the social, cultural, and productive activities of their communities. The competition featured 26 finalist projects from 13 countries. The results will be exhibited at various international venues including the World Urban Forum, to be held in Vancouver, Canada, in June 2006. To achieve "natural" mainstreaming of older persons in the information society, the International Council organized a worldwide competition focused on "Information and Communication Technologies for All Generations" in November 2004 at the meeting of the United Nations Information and Communication Technologies Task Force in Berlin. As part of a series of interlinked congresses addressing the "age of longevity", an international conference on "Caring communities for the twenty-first century: imagining the possible" was held at United Nations Headquarters in 2005 in connection with the forty-third session of the Commission for Social Development.

D. Regional action

45. The Economic Commission for Africa prepared and presented a paper, "Policy and programmatic measures taken to meet the needs of the elderly: Africa's response to a budding challenge" at an African conference on ageing held in Boksburg, South Africa, in August 2004, organized by the Government of South Africa, the Human Sciences Research Council and the Union for African Population Studies. The Commission presented a regional review report at the regional ministerial review conference held in Dakar in June 2004 on the implementation of the Dakar/Ngor Declaration and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. The findings showed that 32 Member States expressed concern regarding population ageing; 10 Member States provided social security or pension schemes to older persons; and institutional care was provided in 15 countries. There was diminishing support to older people because of rural-urban migration of able-bodied men and women; and there was an increasing burden on older persons resulting from their caring for growing numbers of HIV/AIDS sufferers and war orphans.

46. The European regional implementation strategy for the Madrid Plan of Action calls for follow-up through regional cooperation. The Economic Commission for Europe undertook a series of activities to facilitate information exchange on issues and policies related to ageing. A workshop entitled "Care provision in ageing societies: what are the policy challenges and how to address them" was held in Malta in May 2005. The workshop promoted national and regional implementation of commitments related to care provision. Experts identified issues of particular policy importance that should be given priority attention. They also discussed difficulties encountered in meeting the commitments and policy objectives of the regional strategy, and suggested policy measures to address these difficulties. A study on the implications for employment and fiscal policies of population ageing in the Commonwealth of Independent States is under way and preliminary results are expected in early 2006. The study aims to estimate age-related spending in the countries under review during the period 2000-2050. It will assess the fiscal and employment impact of ageing and suggest possible directions for social security reform in the concerned countries.

47. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean organizes its work on ageing within the framework of the regional strategy for the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action. In 2005, the Commission prepared a publication, "The Millennium Development Goals: a Latin American and Caribbean perspective", which includes a section on ageing and poverty, and provides a regional contribution to achieving the goals of the Millennium Declaration. Future activities on ageing will include a study of intergenerational transfers that will serve as an input for a social protection document being elaborated for the Commission's next session, as well as work on the issue of gender inequality in pensions systems and the link between family changes and policies on ageing.

48. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific organized an expert meeting on resource mobilization for population ageing programmes, which identified factors contributing to the lack of sufficient resources to implement the Madrid Plan of Action. The meeting was followed by a regional seminar on follow-up to the Shanghai Implementation Strategy for the Madrid and Macao plans of action, held in Macao, China. The seminar reviewed progress in the implementation of the regional strategy since 2002, and advocated for improved social security protections and long-term health care for older persons.

49. With regard to community support initiatives, the Commission contributed to a training programme on community care in an ageing population, organized by the Office for Seniors Interests and Volunteering (Western Australia) and the Singapore Action Group of Elders and held in Perth, Australia, in May 2005. The primary objective of the training programme was to provide professionals and caregivers with skills and tools to become more effective in providing care and support and understanding how to manage not only medical and physical conditions, but also social and emotional needs of older persons. The Commission plans to conduct training on geriatric community-based health and social services in Jakarta and Dhaka; to organize a workshop in Jaipur, India, on improving the image of older persons in the media; and to conduct three seminars on the effect of the tsunami on older persons, among other vulnerable groups, in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

E. Research Agenda on Ageing for the Twenty-First Century

50. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the International Association of Gerontology continued joint work on the development and dissemination of the Research Agenda on Ageing for the Twenty-First Century. The Research Agenda was adopted by the Valencia Forum in April 2002 and presented to the delegates of the Second World Assembly on Ageing. The General Assembly, by its resolution 57/177 of 18 December 2002, welcomed the adoption of the Research Agenda to support the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action. In 2003, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the International Association of Gerontology conducted four regional workshops which formulated regional research priorities to support implementation of the Plan. During the eighteenth world congress of the International Association of Gerontology and in cooperation with it, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Centre for Ageing Studies of the University of South Australia organized a workshop on further development of the Research Agenda. The workshop reviewed global and regional Research Agenda documents in the light of new challenges and emerging priorities on ageing; explored the contribution of the Research Agenda to

monitoring of the Madrid Plan of Action; proposed updates for the global Research Agenda document; and considered steps to promote and distribute it. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs will present the results of the recent workshop and the deliberations of the four regional workshops in a publication. In connection with the project, the International Association of Gerontology established a working group to examine the feasibility of undertaking a survey to address a number of the research questions identified in the Research Agenda. **The General Assembly may wish to invite Governments to consult and utilize the Research Agenda as a tool for strengthening national capacity on ageing for the implementation, review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action. The Assembly may also wish to invite intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to consider the Research Agenda as a framework for their research activities related to ageing and implementation of the Madrid Plan.**

III. Conclusion

51. The present report provides evidence of broad and diverse activities on ageing around the world. The activities highlighted are linked to or inspired by efforts to implement the Madrid Plan of Action. However, the new developmental vision of national and international action on ageing promoted in the Plan often remains unclaimed. In many parts of the world, awareness of the Madrid Plan remains limited or non-existent. **In this connection, the General Assembly may wish to call on Governments, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system and the non-governmental community to reinforce their advocacy campaigns aimed at informing all major societal actors, including older persons and their organizations, about the decisions taken at the Second World Assembly on Ageing.**

52. Mainstreaming ageing in national plans and international strategies remains a daunting task. Ageing and the situation of older persons often continue to be addressed from a "humanitarian" perspective that ignores the potential of older persons to contribute to reaching national developmental objectives and jeopardizes progress towards achieving global development goals. **The General Assembly may wish to reiterate its recommendation to take into account the situation of older persons in the ongoing efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.**

53. International cooperation for building national capacity to respond to challenges and opportunities of ageing is essential for implementation of the recommendations of the Madrid Plan of Action. However, the human and financial resources available to the United Nations system and specifically to the staff of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs providing technical assistance to Member States remain severely limited. **The General Assembly could again stress the need for additional capacity-building at the national level in order to promote and facilitate the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action and encourage Governments to support the United Nations Trust Fund for Ageing to enable the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to provide expanded assistance to countries, upon their request.**